

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method, comprising:

receiving broadcast communications including content descriptors via a first communications link from a broadcast source, the content descriptors including descriptions of a plurality of corresponding content pieces;

performing a ranking algorithm to rank at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces to generate a ranking feedback; and

transmitting the ranking feedback via a second communications link to a remote location.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the first communications link and the second communication link comprise a common transmission platform.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the first communications link and the second communications link comprise separate transmission platforms.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the ranking feedback comprises a list of ranked content pieces, and wherein transmitting the ranking feedback comprises periodically transmitting a batch of the ranking feedback to the remote location, the remote location being linked to the broadcast source.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the second communications link comprises a continuous connection to the remote location, the remote location being linked to the broadcast source.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the second communications link comprises a connection to the remote location that is initiated to transmit the ranking feedback, the remote location being linked to the broadcast source.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the broadcast communications include a schedule for the content descriptors that is received prior to receiving the content descriptors, the schedule providing information pertaining to when the content descriptors may be received.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the content descriptors comprise a continuous stream of data that may be tapped into at any time to rank at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces via the ranking algorithm.

9. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
receiving broadcast communications including the plurality of content pieces; and
performing a capture algorithm to selectively determine which, if any, of the content pieces should be cached, and
wherein the ranking algorithm is identical to the capture algorithm.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of any existing cached data files to generate the ranking feedback.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein the content descriptors include data pertaining to a revenue-generating potential of at least a portion of the content pieces, and the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of the content piece's revenue generating potential when generating the ranking feedback.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of a user's previous viewing habits to generate the ranking feedback.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of a content piece's size to generate the ranking feedback.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of a user's preferences to generate the ranking feedback.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of an availability window corresponding to a content piece to generate the ranking feedback.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of a future broadcast schedule to generate the ranking feedback.

17. The method of claim 1, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of a content piece's past revenue performance to generate the ranking feedback.

18. The method of claim 1, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of a review of a content piece provided by an external source to generate the ranking feedback.

19. The method of claim 1, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of a content piece's duration to generate the ranking feedback.

20. The method of claim 1, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of a user's age to generate the ranking feedback.

21. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

generating a display on a display device that provides a user-interface that enables a user to rank content pieces so as to indicate a ranked level of demand to receive those content pieces if they are broadcast by the broadcast system.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein the user ranks at least a portion of the content pieces.

23. The method of claim 21, wherein the ranking algorithm automatically ranks at least a portion of the content pieces.

24. The method of claim 22, wherein the ranking algorithm automatically ranks at least a portion of the content pieces that were not ranked by the user.

25. The method of claim 21, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of a user's previous viewing habits to generate the ranking feedback.

26. The method of claim 21, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of a content piece's size to generate the ranking feedback.

27. The method of claim 21, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of a user's preferences to generate the ranking feedback.

28. The method of claim 21, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of an availability window corresponding to a content piece to generate the ranking feedback.

29. The method of claim 21, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of a future broadcast schedule to generate the ranking feedback.

30. The method of claim 21, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of a content piece's past revenue performance to generate the ranking feedback.

31. The method of claim 21, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of a review of a content piece provided by an external source to generate the ranking feedback.

32. The method of claim 21, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of a content piece's duration to generate the ranking feedback.

33. The method of claim 21, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of a user's age to generate the ranking feedback.

34. The method of claim 21, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of any existing cached data files to generate the ranking feedback.

35. An apparatus, comprising:

a processor;

a memory, coupled to the processor, to store a plurality of machine instructions including a ranking algorithm;

a storage device, coupled to the processor, to store content pieces; and

a communications interface, coupled to the processor, which enables the apparatus to receive broadcast communications from a broadcast source via a first communications link, and to send ranking feedback to the broadcast source via a second communications link, the broadcast communications including a plurality of content descriptors that describe a plurality of corresponding content pieces; and

wherein execution of the machine instructions by the processor causes the apparatus to receive the content descriptors as they are broadcast, to perform the ranking algorithm to generate the ranking feedback, the ranking feedback corresponding to at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces, and to transmit the ranking feedback to the broadcast source.

36. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein transmitting the ranking feedback to the broadcast source comprises periodically transmitting the ranking feedback as a batch of ranked content pieces via the communications interface.

37. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the first communications link and the second communications link comprise a common transmission platform.

38. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the first communications link and the second communications link comprise separate transmission platforms.

39. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the communications interface maintains a continuous connection to a remote location to transmit the ranking feedback, the remote location being linked to the broadcast source.

40. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the communications interface initiates a connection to a remote location via a communications link to transmit the ranking feedback, the remote location being linked to the broadcast source.

41. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the broadcast communications include a schedule for the content descriptors that is broadcast prior to sending the content descriptors, and is received via the communications interface, and wherein execution of the plurality of machine instructions further causes the apparatus to prepare for receiving the broadcast of the content descriptors based on the schedule to enable the apparatus to receive the content descriptors when they are broadcast.

42. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the content descriptors comprise a continuous stream of data that may be tapped into at any time by the communications interface to enable the processor to perform the ranking algorithm to rank at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces.

43. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the plurality of machine instructions further include a capture algorithm, which, when executed by the processor, causes the apparatus to selectively determine which, if any, of the content pieces should be stored in the storage device, and wherein the ranking algorithm is identical to the capture algorithm.

44. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein at least one content piece is cached in the storage device, and the ranking algorithm considers the at least one content piece that is cached when generating the ranking feedback.

45. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the content descriptors include data pertaining to a revenue-generating potential of at least a portion of the content pieces, and the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of the content piece's revenue generating potential when generating the ranking feedback.

46. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the memory stores data pertaining to a user's previous viewing habits, and the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of the user's previous viewing habits to generate the ranking feedback.

47. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the content descriptors include data pertaining to a content piece's size, and the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of the content piece's size to generate the ranking feedback.

48. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the memory stores data pertaining to a user's preferences, and the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of the user's preferences to generate the ranking feedback.

49. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the content descriptors include data pertaining to an availability window corresponding to a content piece, and the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of the availability window to generate the ranking feedback.

50. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the content descriptors include data pertaining to a future broadcast schedule, and the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of the future broadcast schedule to generate the ranking feedback.

51. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the content descriptors include data pertaining to a content piece's past revenue performance, and the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of the content piece's past revenue performance to generate the ranking feedback.

52. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the content descriptors include data pertaining to a review of a content piece provided by an external source, and the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of the review to generate the ranking feedback.

53. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the content descriptors include data pertaining to a content piece's duration, and the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of the content piece's duration to generate the ranking feedback.

54. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the memory stores data pertaining to a user's age, and the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of the user's age to generate the ranking feedback.

55. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the apparatus further includes a video subsystem having an output that generates a display on a display device when the display device is connected to the output, and wherein execution of the plurality of machine instructions by the processor causes the apparatus to provide a user-interface that enables a user to rank content pieces to indicate a ranked level of demand to receive those content pieces if they are broadcast by the broadcast system.

56. The apparatus of claim 55, wherein the user ranks at least a portion of the content pieces.

57. The apparatus of claim 55, wherein the ranking algorithm automatically ranks at least a portion of the content pieces.

58. The apparatus of claim 56, wherein the ranking algorithm automatically ranks at least a portion of the content pieces that were not ranked by the user.

59. An article of manufacture, comprising:

a machine-readable medium that provides instructions which, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to:

receive broadcast communications including content descriptors via a first communications link from a broadcast source, the content descriptors including descriptions of a plurality of corresponding content pieces;

perform a ranking algorithm to rank at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces to generate a ranking feedback; and

transmit the ranking feedback via a second communications link to a remote location.

60. The article of manufacture of claim 59, wherein the first communications link and the second communication link comprise a single transmission platform.

61. The article of manufacture of claim 59, wherein the first communications link and the second communications link comprise separate transmission platforms.

62. The article of manufacture of claim 59, wherein the ranking feedback comprises a list of ranked content pieces, and wherein transmitting the ranking feedback comprises periodically transmitting a batch of the ranking feedback to the remote location, the remote location being linked to the broadcast source.

63. The article of manufacture of claim 59, wherein the second communications link comprises a continuous connection to the remote location, the remote location being linked to the broadcast source.

64. The article of manufacture of claim 59, wherein the second communications link comprises a connection to the remote location that is initiated to transmit the ranking feedback, the remote location being linked to the broadcast source.

65. The article of manufacture of claim 59, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of any existing cached data files to generate the ranking feedback.

66. The article of manufacture of claim 59, wherein the content descriptors include data pertaining to a revenue-generating potential of at least a portion of the content pieces, and the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of the content piece's revenue generating potential when generating the ranking feedback.

67. The article of manufacture of claim 59, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of a user's previous viewing habits to generate the ranking feedback.

68. The article of manufacture of claim 59, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of a content piece's size to generate the ranking feedback.

69. The article of manufacture of claim 59, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of a user's preferences to generate the ranking feedback.

70. The article of manufacture of claim 59, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of an availability window corresponding to a content piece to generate the ranking feedback.

71. The article of manufacture of claim 59, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of a future broadcast schedule to generate the ranking feedback.

72. The article of manufacture of claim 59, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of a content piece's past revenue performance to generate the ranking feedback.

73. The article of manufacture of claim 59, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of a review of a content piece provided by an external source to generate the ranking feedback.

74. The article of manufacture of claim 59, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of a content piece's duration to generate the ranking feedback.

75. The article of manufacture of claim 59, wherein the ranking algorithm includes a consideration of a user's age to generate the ranking feedback.

76. The article of manufacture of claim 59, wherein execution of the instructions by the machine, further cause the machine to generate a display on a display device to provide a user-interface that enables a user to rank content pieces to indicate a ranked level of demand to receive those content pieces if they are broadcast by the broadcast system.

77. The article of manufacture of claim 76, wherein the user ranks at least a portion of the content pieces.

78. The article of manufacture of claim 76, wherein the ranking algorithm automatically ranks at least a portion of the content pieces.

79. The article of manufacture of claim 77, wherein the ranking algorithm automatically ranks at least a portion of the content pieces that were not ranked by the user.

80. A method, comprising:

broadcasting broadcast communications including content descriptors from a broadcast source to a plurality of client systems via a first communications link, the content descriptors including descriptions of a plurality of content pieces;

receiving a ranking feedback from the plurality of client systems via a second communications link, wherein the ranking feedback comprises a ranking of at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces.

81. The method of claim 80, wherein the ranking feedback comprises a list of ranked content pieces, and wherein receiving the ranking feedback comprises periodically receiving the ranking feedback as a batch of ranked content pieces from each the plurality of client systems.

82. The method of claim 80, wherein the first communications link and the second communications link comprise a common transmission platform.

83. The method of claim 80, wherein the first communications link and the second communications link comprise separate transmission platforms.

84. The method of claim 80, wherein the second communications link comprises a continuous connection from each of the plurality of client systems for receiving the ranking feedback.

85. The method of claim 80, wherein the second communications link comprises a connection initiated by each of the plurality of client systems.

86. The method of claim 80, wherein the content descriptors comprise a continuous stream of data that may be tapped into at any time to rank at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces.

87. The method of claim 80, wherein the ranking of at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces is generated via a ranking algorithm.

88. The method of claim 80, wherein the ranking feedback includes user ranking of content pieces to indicate a ranked level of demand to receive those content pieces if they are broadcast by the broadcast system.

89. The method of claim 80, wherein the ranking feedback is received from each of the plurality of client systems independently.

90. A broadcast system, comprising:

a server; and

at least one communications link to transmit broadcast communications including content descriptors to a plurality of client systems, the content descriptors including descriptions of a plurality of corresponding content pieces, and to transmit a ranking feedback from each of the plurality of client systems to the server, wherein the ranking feedback comprises a ranking of at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces.

91. The broadcast system of claim 90, wherein the ranking feedback is transmitted periodically as a batch of ranked content pieces via the at least one communications link from each of the plurality of client systems to the server.

92. The broadcast system of claim 90, wherein the at least one communications link comprises a continuous connection to transmit ranking feedback from the plurality of client systems to the server.

93. The broadcast system of claim 90, wherein the at least one communications link comprises a connection from each of the plurality of client systems to the server that is initiated to transmit the ranking feedback.

94. The broadcast system of claim 90, wherein the content descriptors comprise a continuous stream of data that may be tapped into at any time to rank at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces.

95. The broadcast system of claim 90, wherein the ranking of at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces is generated via a ranking algorithm.

96. The broadcast system of claim 90, wherein the ranking feedback includes user ranking of content pieces to indicate a ranked level of demand to receive those content pieces if they are broadcast by the broadcast system.

97. The broadcast system of claim 90, wherein the ranking feedback is transmitted independently from each of the plurality of client systems to the server.

98. An article of manufacture, comprising:

a machine-readable medium that provides instructions which, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to:

broadcast broadcast communications including content descriptors from a broadcast source to a plurality of client systems via a first communications link, the content descriptors including descriptions of a plurality of content pieces;

receive a ranking feedback from the plurality of client systems via a second communications link, wherein the ranking feedback comprises a ranking of at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces.

99. The article of manufacture of claim 98, wherein the ranking feedback comprises a list of ranked content pieces, and wherein receiving the ranking feedback comprises periodically receiving the ranking feedback as a batch of ranked content pieces from each of the plurality of client systems.

100. The article of manufacture of claim 98, wherein the first communications link and the second communications link comprise a common transmission platform.

101. The article of manufacture of claim 98, wherein the first communications link and the second communications link comprise separate transmission platforms.

102. The article of manufacture of claim 98, wherein the second communications link comprises a continuous connection from each of the plurality of client systems for receiving the ranking feedback.

103. The article of manufacture of claim 98, wherein the second communications link comprises a connection initiated by each of the plurality of client systems.

104. The article of manufacture of claim 98, wherein the ranking of at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces is generated via a ranking algorithm.

105. The article of manufacture of claim 98, wherein the ranking feedback includes user ranking of content pieces to indicate a ranked level of demand to receive those content pieces if they are broadcast by the broadcast system.

106. A system, comprising:

a server;

at least one communications link; and

a client system, the client system including a processor and a memory to store a ranking algorithm; and wherein

a plurality of content descriptors are transmitted via the at least one communications link to the client system, the plurality of content descriptors including descriptions of a plurality of content pieces;

the processor implements the ranking algorithm to rank at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces to generate a ranking feedback; and

the ranking feedback is transmitted via the at least one communications link to the server.

107. The system of claim 106, wherein the ranking feedback is transmitted periodically via the at least one communications link to the server as a batch of ranked content pieces.

108. The system of claim 106, wherein the ranking feedback includes user ranking of the content pieces.

109. The system of claim 106, wherein the ranking feedback includes automated ranking of the content pieces.

110. The system of claim 106, wherein the ranking feedback includes user ranking of the content pieces and automated ranking of the content pieces.

111. The system of claim 106, wherein the at least one communications link comprises a continuous connection to transmit the ranking feedback to the server.

112. The system of claim 106, wherein the at least one communications link comprises a connection initiated by the client system to transmit the ranking feedback to the server.

113. A method, comprising:

broadcasting content descriptors from a server to at least one client system via at least one communications link, the content descriptors including descriptions of a plurality of corresponding content pieces;

receiving the content descriptors at the at least one client system;

ranking at least a portion of the plurality of content pieces to generate a ranking feedback; and

communicating the ranking feedback to the server via the at least one communications link.

114. The method of claim 113, further comprising:

processing the ranking feedback to generate an aggregate representation of the feedback from the at least one client system; and

selecting a portion of the plurality of content pieces to be sent to the at least one client system in response to the aggregate representation of the feedback.

115. The method of claim 113, wherein communicating the ranking feedback to the server comprises periodically communicating a batch of ranking feedback.

116. The method of claim 113, wherein the at least one communications link comprises a continuous connection for communicating the ranking feedback to the server.

117. The method of claim 113, wherein the at least one communications link comprises a connection initiated by the at least one client system for communicating the ranking feedback to the server.

118. The method of claim 113, wherein the ranking feedback includes user ranking of the content pieces.

119. The method of claim 113, wherein the ranking feedback includes automated ranking of the content pieces.

120. The method of claim 113, wherein the ranking feedback includes user ranking of the content pieces and automated ranking of the content pieces.

121. The method of claim 113, wherein the ranking feedback is communicated from each at least one client system to the server independently.

121. The method of claim 113, wherein the ranking feedback is communicated from each at least one client system to the server independently.